

Dear Chairman Martin:

I am writing to challenge the Comcast/Time Warner/Adelphia merger (FCC Docket No. 05-192) and the AT&T/BellSouth merger (FCC Docket No. 06-74). Allowing the largest telecommunications company and the two largest cable companies and in the United States to grow even larger does not serve the public interest.

The concentration of media power is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are increasingly falling under the control of a handful of giant corporations. The cost of broadband service also remains out of reach for many households. Americans are hungry for more competition in services. However, these mergers will only starve Americans of this needed competition.

Allowing AT&T to combine with BellSouth will give the top three broadband providers control of over half of all broadband connections in the country. At the same time, the Time Warner/Comcast/Adelphia merger will give Comcast and Time Warner increased power over entire regions of the United States, allowing rates to rise even as the digital divide continues to grow.

The FCC should block these transactions or impose strict conditions to protect free speech and competition under its "public interest standard." If the FCC decides to allow either of these mergers, it should require the following conditions:

1. Subscribers must be able to choose from competitive Internet Service Providers ("open access"). The FCC should also ensure that these companies cannot discriminate against any Internet content or rival service and that every service will be treated exactly the same ("Network Neutrality").
2. Companies must be required to sell broadband access separate from video and telephone service, and at the same price ("naked broadband" or "unbundling").
3. Any subscriber must be able to connect any device to the network (such as a Wi-Fi router) that does not harm the network.
4. Take steps to protect public access programming ("PEG"). Cable companies have become less responsive to the needs and requirements of communities. The quality of public accountability in local franchise agreements has declined, as big companies leverage their power to squeeze local governments. Likewise, telecommunications giants — like AT&T — are trying to eliminate the remaining vestiges of effective local oversight and control altogether.
5. Independent programmers must be able to reach subscribers. We are required to buy channels we

don't want or need because providers of video service bundle them together.

6. Any company that owns both programming and video systems should be required to provide competitors with access to their regional sports and other programming needed to offer competing services, so consumers will still have real choices.

In conclusion, I ask the FCC to consider the interests of the people like me who pay for a variety of services. I have dropped cable and sold my TV. I cannot see paying \$50.00 + for 100 or more stations when there are only three or four which really interest me. I use dial up for my internet partly because I've been loyal to my Land Service and I've been very happy with their billing and service. I've liked the fact that they keep a promise. They keep their service, billing and communications simple. I'm not bothered by any advertising in their billing. They have not changed the price of my service since the day I signed on for their service. I trust this small New Mexican company far greater than the mega corporations. They have improved their service without extra cost or concern to me.

On the other hand I've decided to drop AT&T as my long distance carrier. Why would I want to be forced to use their service for my internet needs? My experience with them has been less than desirable. Their reps are a lot like AOL reps. As far as I am concerned AOL should be investigated. When you call to close the account with these companies the reps they lead you down a path of confusing alternate options & extra charges. In other words their business is based upon a string of subtle lies and rip-off. They are very good at it. I've been suckered by both. As far as I'm concerned they are two companies I never want to deal with again. I don't like the way they do business. I want and like options. I appreciate and will support the smaller companies who are forthright and keep their promises. I do not appreciate having mega corporations dictating my needs to me, not when I'm paying the bill.

As a student and future teacher - researcher - writer, I use the internet almost constantly. I will need to use the internet even more as time goes on. My students will be directed to do research on the computer. I live in a small town in New Mexico and I can personally vouch for the difference that free access to the internet has made in the education of the people of this town. Our small Jr. College is able to offer BA degrees through the use of Distance Education. The number of lives that have been given hope through access to research and information is remarkable. Free access has made a difference. Please do remove opportunity by creating a digital divide. Please do hand over the power of all of our communication: Telephone, internet, cable to the huge corporations who continue to merge. Continue to allow the smaller companies provide service to the people.

In a democracy/capitativistic society diversity is the key to maintaining our free system of government. Please support our democracy by supporting diversity in media choices.

